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* The "Plea for the Middle Classes" was the document which led to the foundation of the large groups of "Woodard Schools" which now (1884) include 3 in Sussex (Lancing, Hove & Brighton) 1 in Staffs. (Derby) 1 in Shropsh. (Ellesmere, dependent on Denstone) 1 in Somerset. (Taunton) & 1 I think in Yorkshire. J.G.T.

> The "Plea for the Middle Classes" (Lancet) 1884. Woodard.

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Sacrilege and its Encouragement,

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE S. GEORGE'S RIOTS AND
OF THEIR SUCCESSES,

IN A

LETTER OF REMONSTRANCE

TO

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

BY

BRYAN KING, M.A.,

RECTOR OF S. GEORGE'S IN THE EAST, AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF
BRASENOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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A LETTER,

ETC.

MY LORD,

FOR months past I have been urged by friends to publish a statement upon the subject of this letter.

It has been pressed upon me that the public in general know nothing of the riots of St. George's in the East, or of their origin, save what they gather from the imperfect or erroneous representations of newspapers; but hitherto I have been content to remain silent. I have never cared to correct the misstatements of newspapers respecting myself; I have been conscious that mine was an unpopular cause;—that it was in vain to attempt to inform those who would not willingly be informed;—that in such a case the best and safest policy was a quiet persistence in what I believed to be the path of duty, leaving it to the world to judge of me or to speak of me as it would.

In this resolution I should have willingly continued steadfast still, had it not been for the course of conduct which you, my Lord, have lately deemed right to pursue in reference to myself and to those unhappy people whose outrages at my church have been, alas, so notorious.

Now, not *my own cause*, but the cause of *the Church*, compels me to break through that law of silence which hitherto I have been content to impose upon myself.

The scenes of riot then which have been enacted in my church during the last ten months have happily been an entirely new, and a monstrous thing in England. A year ago and the bare possibility of such long continued outrages occurring in any church would have been regarded as an utter impossibility. Let me then, so far as I may be able, endeavour shortly to give their history and origin.

And here it may be well that I should allude to the circumstances of my entrance upon the charge of this parish in the year 1842. Those circumstances were not in all respects very propitious. In the first place, the congregation of the

parish church had lately been much reduced in numbers by the following circumstance:¹—The clergyman who had been very deservedly popular as the curate who for some years had been in charge of the parish church, had recently been appointed the first Incumbent of Christ-Church, a new district church of the parish, and many members of the congregation of the parish church had not unnaturally accompanied him thither: and in the next place, the late Bishop of the diocese had just delivered his celebrated Charge, in which, with a view of promoting uniformity of worship within the churches of his diocese, he had urged his clergy to carry out with greater strictness the laws of the Church with reference to the mode of celebrating Divine Service.

At this period neither he nor perhaps any other member of the Church had anticipated the difficulties of such a step. None then understood, as by the light of experience we all do now, that strict uniformity in the mode of conducting Divine Service, between congregations so widely differing in all their circumstances, as e.g., a highly educated congregation of London and an untutored flock of the mountains of Wales, must ever be most undesirable even if it be barely possible. None then understood, as we do now, that developments of outward ritual can never safely be introduced, except in cases where a congregation has been led by long teaching to desire its adoption as the outward expression and manifestation of the truths which it is the province of ritual to enshrine and set forth.

Hence, immediately upon my entering upon this cure, I carried out the directions of that Charge amidst a congregation, to every member of which I was necessarily a stranger. All can remember the general unpopularity of this change where it was effected even under much more favourable circumstances than were those under which I acted here. But the step having been taken, it was very difficult to recede. When the Bishop was appealed to, he could but say, as every Bishop must say under similar circumstances, "I cannot recommend or even authorise any clergyman to break the laws of the Church; all that I can do is to undertake not to prosecute

¹ The Petition of the Vestry presented to both Houses of Parliament during the present session commences thus: "That the Rev. Bryan King became Rector of this Parish in the year 1843" (a misstatement of a very simple matter of fact), "at which time the services of the Parish Church were attended by a large portion of the parishioners"—the number of the parishioners being about 45,000, and the extent of accommodation afforded by all the sittings of the church being for 1230!

a clergyman who may so offend ; and this, in the particular instance, I am ready to do.”

The restored ritual had been carried out by me in my church for the space of about two years, when a formal request was made to me on behalf of the parishioners to abandon it. Whether rightly or wrongly, I felt that I had no right to do this—no right thus to give up my obedience to those positive laws of the Church which had been re-affirmed and re-imposed by competent authority.

I do not now maintain that I was right in thus judging—indeed I do not now even at this distance of time venture to judge myself in this matter ; for though it is certain that a very general distrust and estrangement of my parishioners from myself seemed to be the consequence of my resolution ; yet of course on the other hand, it is possible that some deep lessons as to the sanctity of law, and especially of the law of the Church of God, as something worth maintaining and worth suffering for, in opposition to the demands of popular will and resolutions of riotous vestry meetings, may have been thus taught in the hearts of several of my parishioners, such as could have been no otherwise imparted.

But I am far from wishing to vindicate myself in this matter. Of course I may have erred grievously in my motives in this as in any other matter ; there is One only Judge of this.

At all events, the opposition to myself began to assume a very hostile form. Large public meetings were held ; violent resolutions were passed, and circulated through the parish ; in short, all available means were adopted in order to bring public odium to bear upon me. A person who has since been called to his great account, and of whom therefore I shall say nothing, was for several years re-elected churchwarden. Every mode of intimidation and coercion was tried against me—all the ordinary expenses of conducting Divine Service were withheld—the church clock was stopped, the salaries of the church servants were suspended, and the organist was only paid his salary on the express condition of his refusing to discharge the duties of his office.¹

And here I may state incidentally that it was to this circumstance that the introduction of a choral Service into my

¹ “In the year 1856 the Rector, presuming on the marked forbearance of the parishioners” (!) Extract from Petition of Inhabitants presented to Parliament in the present session. “That the remonstrance of the parish was conceived and made in the most courteous manner” (!) Extract from Petition of Vestry.

church, about the year 1846, is to be ascribed. Several members of the congregation met together and agreed to pay the salaries of a professional choir who might be able to conduct the musical parts of the service independently of the aid of the organ; and thus shortly afterwards, with my concurrence, a choral Service was established, as the result of a natural re-action in the case of a congregation which had been for some time deprived of all music whatever.

This hostile attitude of the parishioners, as represented by the vestry, towards myself continued to prevail for some time; but happily it never as yet showed itself in the way of outrages or profanations committed in the church during Divine Service. At this period there was, I think, generally prevalent in England a conviction that the law regarded such conduct in the light of a very heinous crime, and would not fail to visit its commission with very heavy penalties.

At length, however, all this active hostility against myself seemed gradually to have subsided; in one instance, the evil may be said to have corrected itself, and the parishioners found

“their pleasant vices
Made instruments to scourge them.”

For those churchwardens, who had been selected as suitable instruments for the purpose of harassing and persecuting me, became so violent and offensive in their bearing towards their constituents, that in self-defence the more respectable parishioners rallied, and for several years elected as their officers those to whose courteous and conscientious conduct in the discharge of their duties I now gladly bear my testimony. Thus a better feeling on the part of the parishioners was gradually restored, and I was permitted in comparative peace to pursue my almost *hopeless* work in the midst of this dreary wilderness of human souls. The number of these in connection with the parish church, and thus nominally under my pastoral charge, was about 30,000. With crippled means, I had but one or at most two assisting curates; and with such a vast population it was of course impossible to gain anything like a pastoral or personal influence amongst them. I was here indeed “as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers;” all that I could hope to do was barely to hold this cheerless outpost of the Church, and to maintain, as an almost solitary witness and watchman, Her daily course of Divine Services.

And here in the extent and the character of this population

has obviously ever been the great source of all my difficulties. The population of my parish consists of those very classes who are, alas! almost universally alienated from attendance upon the Services of the Church. All the manufacturers, all the tradesmen and shopkeepers who can afford a residence elsewhere, very naturally remove their families to a less objectionable locality. And so, of all the families who were in the habit of attending the parish church when I became rector in 1842, though of course there may be more of whom I am ignorant, *I only know of three* who are yet remaining as residents in the parish. There remain as residents in such parishes as this, a residuum as it were, which is mainly composed of the smaller class of shopkeepers, artisans, and the various classes of labourers employed in the docks, on the river, or in the multiform occupations of London manufacture.

But even this description fails to give any adequate idea of the difficulties with which a parish Priest has to cope in such a neighbourhood as this. The part of the parish about the parish church abounds with boarding houses for sailors and with all the low public houses, dancing saloons, and other haunts which such a population ever brings in its train. And of the character of that population, in the midst of which the parish church actually stands, I may here cite this one statistical fact.

The East London Association was established about two and a half years ago for the purpose of applying some check to the outward immorality of this neighbourhood, and of prosecuting some of the most infamous of the houses of ill fame. They procured a careful survey to be made of a considerable section of the population contained within a parallelogram of four streets within which my parish church is situated. They found that the section in question contained in all 733 houses—of which 27 were public houses, 13 were beer houses, and *no fewer than 154 were brothels*.

Now, my Lord, what wonder is it that such a population as is indicated by this fact should ever contain within it the elements of the most virulent opposition to any exhibition of religious earnestness? What wonder is it, that very many of such a population should ever be ready to seize upon any occasion for making a church the scene of outrage and blasphemy? What wonder is it that when they should have been allowed thus to act in any church for the space of ten

months with utter impunity, nay, with too much of the appearance of direct *encouragement* on the part of many in authority, their conduct should have become so utterly atrocious as to be only too fitly characterised even in secular newspapers by the term "devilish?"

Surely, there is no wonder in all this. But in this, my Lord, there is wonder, to me absolutely inscrutable, that under such circumstances I should be appealed to by any, I do not say *religious* but *rational* being, as I have been through newspapers and otherwise, in effect to sacrifice the ritual of my church, and thus the religious privileges of my people, to the will of those most wretched creatures who have been guilty of all this "devilish outrage and blasphemy."

But over and above these difficulties arising from the size and character of the population with which I have had to deal, there is yet another arising from the *character of my church*.

It is in the midst of a population mainly of poor. But if ever a church was fitted up as though for the very purpose of deterring the poor from entering its walls, that church is my own. It is blocked up with huge and high boxes, into which the poor with their timid delicacy ever shrink from entering. It would be as reasonable to assure such that they would be perfectly welcome as guests in Buckingham Palace, as to assure them that they have any right to enter a church so penned up and appropriated as mine.

Under these circumstances, then, what wonder is it that my congregation was a comparatively small one? Is there any church in England so circumstanced where it is otherwise? Certainly there is no reason to believe that the smallness of my congregation was to be ascribed to the character of the services celebrated there, but quite the contrary; for *my congregation has been very much larger than that of either of the two nearest churches*, one of them within the parish and the other without, both of which have perfectly plain services; and both of which are surrounded by neighbourhoods precisely similar in character to my own.

The truth is, that such populations as mine have become utterly lost to the Church, and must be slowly and painfully won back again to her fold by patient missionary labour. And this is the very effort which has been made in my parish. In the year 1856 I received, and most thankfully accepted, the offer to make this experiment in such a population as mine. Since the institution of this mission in my parish, two

chapels have been opened and maintained, several new schools have been carried on, a refuge for penitent women has been established, a system of street preaching and house to house visitation carried out, and other means adopted in order to arouse the negligent and careless to some care for their souls.

And here in connection with this subject allow me to notice a statement which occurs in a petition which has been presented by Mr. Butler to the House of Commons,¹ and by Lord Ebury to the House of Lords, during the present Session, on behalf of a considerable number of parishioners. The statement in question is as follows:—"Contrary to the design of the parochial system, your petitioners have been practically without a pastor for seventeen years." Now it is notorious that my predecessor in this charge took no part whatever in the pastoral care of the parish for very many years before his death; that the whole undivided charge of about 45,000 people devolved upon the care of a single curate; and that the celebration of Divine Service was confined to four times during the week.

In place of the above 45,000 people, my charge has been reduced through the formation of Ecclesiastical Districts, first to 30,000 and eventually to 27,000. For the pastoral care of this reduced population I have enjoyed during the last four years the assistance of from three to six curates; while the former *four* services per week have been increased to *fifty-four*, in the parish church and mission chapels.

Now, of course, I do not state this as intending to indicate that my existing means of evangelization are at all adequate to the necessities of the case; but simply to show the recklessness of assertion which is hazarded respecting myself and my pastoral charge, even by those who have the means of accurate information on the subject.² What wonder is it then that such reckless statements as the above should be repeated

¹ This petition was very numerously signed, but the Committee on Petitions reported to the House that it contravened one of the Standing Orders, inasmuch as a great number of the signatures were in the same handwriting.

² It is stated in the Petition which is alluded to in the foregoing note, as well as in that presented by the Vestry, of equally veracious authority, "that the parochial charities have not been advocated in the Parish Church for seventeen years, to the great injury of the poor and needy." Now the alms collected in the church for the poor in the year 1841 (being the year before I became rector) amounted to £18. 11s. 7d., whilst those collected in the church for the same object in 1858 (the year 1859, during which the church was closed for six weeks, is obviously exceptional) amounted to £32. 13s. 8½d.!

and exaggerated by hostile newspapers, which have no means of accurate information, until the public at large has been led to the conviction that during the last seventeen years this parish has been reduced from the condition of an ecclesiastical paradise to one of a spiritual wilderness ?

But to return to my more special charge at the parish church. I have stated then, that the congregation was comparatively a small one ; but I must also state that it consisted of a considerable proportion of those who showed great religious earnestness. The daily evening Service was well attended by a constant and steady congregation of from thirty to fifty ; and during the last six months, when there were celebrations of the Holy Communion at 8 A. M., and again at the 11 o'clock Service on each Sunday, there was an average attendance of more than forty communicants every Sunday, which was a larger number than I found at the monthly communions.

And now let me advert to the subject of those Eucharistic Vestments, for the adoption of which reproach and ridicule have been so generally heaped upon me. My congregation then had gradually been prepared to appreciate a higher ritual—they had been gradually led to desire a higher ritual, as the outward expression and embodiment of the purport of that service offered to Almighty God, the full meaning of which they had learnt more and more to realise. Accordingly a higher and a fuller ritual had been gradually pressed upon my adoption by those whom I could reasonably regard as the exponents of the feelings and wishes of my congregation at large.

I could not but see that the whole current of feeling amongst the earnest hearts of the Church of England was setting steadily in such direction. The building, restoration, and decoration of churches, and the celebration of Divine Service with greater care and cost in every part of the country, all indicated this feeling. It was evident that the awakened hearts of the children of the Church could no longer rest satisfied with that sordid meanness in the celebration of the service of Almighty God which had characterised past ages of coldness and neglect. And thus when now about three years ago the prescribed vestments for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist were presented to me and pressed upon my adoption by several members of my congregation, I felt not only justified but *bound* to use them. I knew, of course, that the whole Church, perhaps from the very beginning, had

distinguished the blessed Eucharist of Her SAVIOUR'S Body and Blood as the one great act of Christian Sacrifice and Worship, by prescribing special vestments for the celebration of It alone of all her other Services ;—I knew, of course, that the Church of England had followed this universal example by laying down the same rule ;—I knew, of course, that this Her rule had but lately been re-affirmed by the celebrated Knights-bridge judgment,¹ with which judgment you, my Lord, had expressed your formal concurrence.

In acting then upon this rule, and in thus carrying out the wishes of my congregation by celebrating the great Memorial Sacrifice of the Church in the vestments which the Church of England has prescribed, why was I to be blamed? I never heard of a single member of my congregation having been offended at the adoption of these vestments, whilst on the contrary, I knew of several to whom their use in the Eucharistic Service was most instructive and edifying. In introducing a higher and more perfect ritual into my church in this or in any other respect, was I to consult the feelings of my own congregation, or was I to consult the feelings of my parishioners at large? I really am not aware that *they* had the slightest religious or equitable claim to any such reference of the question to them. My church was not originally built by the parishioners; the services were not maintained by the parishioners, but solely by the offerings of the congregation; the clergy are not supported by the parishioners, but on the contrary, the payment of the sum of £100 per annum to the rector, which was settled by the Act which constituted the parish (2 Geo. II., cap. 30,) in lieu of certain of his common law rights to Easter dues, small tithes, and garden pennies—was being evaded, because he had no power of enforcing such payment through a court of law ;—or was I then to consult

¹ The following is the passage of that judgment to which allusion is here made, "The rubric to the Prayer Book of January 1, 1604, adopts the language of the rubric of Elizabeth. The rubric to the present Prayer Book adopts the language of the statute of Elizabeth ; (1 Eliz. cap. 2.) but they all obviously mean the same thing—that the same dresses and the same utensils or articles which were used under the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. may still be used." It is hardly necessary to quote the well known rubric of that first Prayer Book of Edward VI. to the authority of which we are here referred. "Upon the day and at the time appointed for the ministration of the Holy Communion, the Priest that shall execute the holy ministry shall put upon him the vesture appointed for that ministration, that is to say, a white alb plain with a vestment (i. e., chasuble) or cope."

the wishes of the general public, or of that mob collected from all parts of London, the sensitiveness of whose religious predilections has been shown in their converting my church into an habitual scene of outrage and blasphemy?

I cannot indeed see any reason why I was to be blamed for acting in this instance as I did. These Eucharistic vestments of the Church are being used in from fifty to sixty churches in England, and their adoption is being extended in other churches, I believe, almost every month. I am sure that we shall never succeed in teaching our flocks, and especially the poorer members of them, the deep doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, and the place which that Sacrament holds in the economy of Christian grace as the one great act of Worship and Sacrifice offered by the Church to Almighty God, without the aid of such external adjuncts of ritual. Despite the objections of a cold and cheerless puritanism, the adage is as true now as ever,

*“Segniùs irritant animos demissa per aures
Quàm quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.”*

And it is the observation of no mean authority on such points: “To this purpose it is good that we transplant the instruments of fancy into religion; and for this reason music was brought into churches, and ornaments, and perfumes, and comely garments, and solemnities, and decent ceremonies, that the busy and less discerning fancy, being bribed with its proper objects, may be instrumental to a more celestial and heavenly love.”¹

I am indeed aware, my Lord, that although you at the time expressed your concurrence with that celebrated judgment which re-affirmed the legality of these Eucharistic vestments of the Church, yet that you have since then expressed different sentiments upon the point. I am aware, for instance, that in your letter to the vestry of this parish, of September 5, 1859, which was published in the newspapers at the time, you characterised the use of these vestments as “this childish mummerly of antiquated garments,” whilst in reference to submitting the question of their legality to the courts of law, —you stated that the “nature of the controversy turned on the shape and pattern of the clothes worn at the time of the Reformation and their points of resemblance to, and divergence from, the garments made for us in the present day.”

¹ Bp. Jer. Taylor, on Holy Living, ch. 4, § 3.

But, my Lord, permit me to urge that there can be no possible controversy as to the shape and pattern of the vestments prescribed by the existing law of the Church of England to be worn at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

It is notorious that the shape and pattern of those used at the time of the Reformation are exhibited in innumerable monumental brasses and illuminations ;—nay, that *the actual vestments themselves are in existence*, as in the case of the Cope of Ely Cathedral, and other instances. So that in fact there can be no more controversy as to the shape and pattern of these vestments than there can be of that of the *backs on which they were worn*.

But I am aware, my Lord, that you urged another objection to the use of these vestments, in the House of Lords, when the Bishop of Exeter vindicated their strict legality upon the occasion of Lord Ebury presenting a petition of certain parishioners against myself, on Feb. 13th. You then stated your belief that the 58th Canon of 1603, had rendered the use of the Eucharistic vestments illegal.¹ Now in the first place it is obviously open for any one to contend that the words of that Canon, "Every minister saying the public prayers, or ministering the sacraments or other rites of the Church, shall wear a decent and comely surplice with sleeves," &c., may be construed as applying to the sacraments as used in the less restricted sense in which the word occurs in the Book of Homilies, and so may bear no intended reference to the great Sacrament of the Church, for which, as the compilers of this canon must have well known, a special provision of vestments was made. But with this part of the question we have now no actual concern ; the only question for us now to consider is this, How is it possible that a canon of 1603 can supersede the authority of the rubric, virtually authorising and prescribing the use of the Eucharistic vestments, at the commencement of our present Prayer Book, which was confirmed by Act of Parliament in the year 1662 ?

So that I must submit, my Lord, that the question of the full legality of these Eucharistic vestments remains perfectly unquestionable ; until indeed some such bill as the very notable one lately introduced into the House of Commons by

¹ "His belief was that it was exceedingly doubtful whether those vestments as used at S. George's in the East were not abolished by those canons which the noble Lord (Ebury) appeared anxious to abrogate."—*Times Report*, Feb. 14, 1860.

Mr. Danby Seymour, be passed through parliament and be accepted by the Church in Convocation.

But I must here insist, that the use of these Eucharistic vestments had nothing whatever to do with the outbreak of those disturbances which have made the very name of this parish infamous. They had been in use for a considerable period before the appearance of any shadow of those disturbances, and their use had been continued for a considerable period during those disturbances, whilst the service at which they were used *was the only service which remained wholly undisturbed.*

And this consideration brings me to the real and only origin and cause of all these disgraceful outrages.

In the month of December, 1858, the office of lecturer in my church became vacant. The election was understood to be placed in the vestry of this parish, elected under the Metropolis Local Management Act.

The members of this vestry are elected by the inhabitants of the whole parish, of about 50,000 people,—and the main duties of their office consist in providing for the paving, lighting, and sewerage of the parish. I need hardly say that their election for such purposes and by such a constituency does not necessarily imply any very profound theological attainments, nor even the existence of any respectable personal morality in the persons elected—all the persons so elected may be dissenters, Jews, or even avowed atheists. Of course I am very far from wishing to characterise the members of the present vestry by any such sweeping description. I only point out this circumstance to indicate the extreme incongruity and absurdity of investing any such body with the responsibility of selecting a religious teacher for the Churchmen of the parish.

The Rev. Hugh Allen stood almost alone amongst the clergy in this district of London for the extravagance of his tenets in the direction of puritanism. He had in the month of December, 1858, taken part at a public meeting of the friends of Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, and had there advocated the contribution of funds for the purpose of erecting a tabernacle for his preaching. He had lately been elected as the lecturer of the neighbouring parish church of Stepney, but the rector of that church had successfully prevented his entrance upon the office by the interposition of his veto against his being licensed by your Lordship.

Of course the vacancy in the office of lecturer at my church afforded his adherents an opportunity of vindicating their favourite preacher, of which they were not slow to avail themselves. Inflammatory placards were circulated through my parish, exhorting the parishioners to vindicate their protestantism by procuring the election of Mr. Allen. Petitions were numerously signed, requesting the vestry to elect him; and accordingly, on the 31st March, 1859, he was elected to the office of lecturer.

And here, my Lord, I cannot but deeply regret the course which you saw fit to pursue in this instance. You were appealed to for the licence enabling Mr. Allen to officiate in my church. His violent antagonism to the system of worship and teaching carried out in my church was perfectly notorious: and I had urged my presumed right of exercising a veto upon Mr. Allen's appointment in my capacity of rector, —but your legal secretary wrote to me, then in the country, on May 12th, stating that you considered that you had no option but to grant the licence. Upon this I wrote to your secretary on May 14th, urging my formal protest against the granting a licence to Mr. Allen, on the ground of that schismatical act in reference to Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, to which I have already alluded, but more especially upon a ground of even much graver import; viz. upon that of the public scandal which had been caused in this district, for unhappily the circumstance was but too notorious, by the conduct which had compelled him to resign his lectureship at the church of S. Luke's, Old Street, about four years previously.

This protest was received by your secretary on May 15th. It was surely of such a character as to have deserved at least some investigation; but without any further communication with myself, Mr. Allen was licensed by your Lordship on May 17th.

The result of this act more than realised my worst anticipations. The Act of the parish under which Mr. Allen was appointed (2 Geo. II. cap. 30) enjoined that "the lecturer should be admitted by the rector to have the use of the pulpit from time to time," but Mr. Allen apparently assumed the right of using the pulpit at any time that he pleased.

I was then absent from home. Accordingly on Sunday, May 22nd, he entered the church at 3.40 p.m., amidst shouts of "Bravo, Allen!" from the mob, who were supporting him in his unseemly conduct, and, against the protest of the

curate in charge, insisted upon saying the Litany and preaching, thus entirely superseding the ordinary parochial service of the Litany and catechizing at 4 p.m. This act of Mr. Allen was the occasion of creating for the first time a most disgraceful disturbance and uproar in the church. When he ascended the pulpit especially, and there triumphantly brandished your Lordship's licence in his hand, he was greeted with repeated shouts of applause.

Upon being informed of all this, I wrote to your Lordship requesting your interference to prevent the repetition of such an outrage; on this you "earnestly recommended" Mr. Allen not to attempt to officiate again in my church until his and my rights should be adjusted through the decision of a court of law or otherwise.

Mr. Allen was constrained to act upon this recommendation; but, unhappily, his adherents had learnt that they could commit acts of outrage in the church during Divine Service with impunity. They had seen the churchwardens openly abetting Mr. Allen in his act of discreditable invasion of Sunday, May 22nd, and they, with good reason, calculated upon their entire sympathy.

On the following Sunday afternoon, owing to the threatening aspect of the crowds in the precincts of the church, the usual Service was not attempted to be celebrated; but on the church being opened for the Litany Service on Sunday, June 5th, it was immediately filled by a mob who hooted and shouted on the entrance of the clergy and choir into the church, and who persisted in their blasphemous clamour and violence to such an extent that the celebration of Divine Service was rendered quite impossible,—and the extrication of the clergy and choir by the aid of the police was not effected without some difficulty. On this day the evening Service (at 7 p.m.) was again the scene of most disgraceful outrage. The rectors of several of the neighbouring parishes and other clergy, unsolicited by myself, took part in the Service, in order to give me the moral support of their presence; but at the close of the Service it was with difficulty that I was rescued by them and by several policemen from an attack of the mob.

And now, in consequence of these profane outrages, and also in consequence of the refusal of the chief commissioner of police, at the instance of the churchwardens, to allow the police to act within the church, as conveyed to me on June

10th, I was compelled partially to close the church on the two following Sundays.

In the meantime the vestry had appealed to the Court of Queen's Bench for a mandamus commanding me to admit Mr. Allen into the pulpit of my church. The case was argued on June 16th, when the court decided that the act of Mr. Allen on Sunday, May 22nd, was an "intrusion," and that he had no right to preach at any time when I chose to occupy the pulpit,—suggesting that he should be allowed to celebrate a Service of his own on Sunday afternoons after the conclusion of my own parochial service.

In accordance with this suggestion I offered to Mr. Allen, in a conference with his solicitor, the use of the church for such Service at 5 p.m., but upon being urged with the inconvenience of this hour to Mr. Allen and his congregation, I eventually consented to allow his Service to precede my own, and to commence at a quarter after 2 p.m. Under this arrangement Mr. Allen officiated for the first time on Sunday, June 29th, and showed his appreciation of my conduct in having thus consulted the convenience of himself and his congregation, by giving utterance to an address in which he severely reflected upon the character of the Services celebrated in the church.¹ This appeal was responded to by the act of some 200 or 300 of his congregation remaining in the church after the conclusion of his Service, and taking possession of the choir-stalls for the purpose of preventing the celebration of my Service. At the instance of the churchwarden I desisted from making the attempt.

On the following Sunday the same act was repeated. Upon this I warned Mr. Allen's solicitor that if my Service were molested in future, I should act upon the suggestion of the Court of Queen's Bench, and require Mr. Allen to conduct his Service after the conclusion of mine. Accordingly on Sunday, July 10th, Mr. Allen's congregation was induced to leave the church by the personal efforts of himself and of the churchwarden. And thus for several Sundays I was permitted to conduct my afternoon Service in comparative freedom from disturbance.

¹ "The preacher did not forget that he stood in the pulpit of a Puseyite Rector, and was appointed in antagonism to him. He found occasion therefore to dwell repeatedly, and in a marked manner, on disputed doctrines, and pomp, and ceremony, troupes of choristers, and ritualism, as being opposed to 'the everlasting Gospel.'"—Report of "East London Observer" of July 2, 1859.

But again numbers of Mr. Allen's congregation began to attend my Service for the purpose of disturbing it, and on August 14th they took possession of the choir-stalls, and interrupted the singing of the Litany with hisses and shouts, until in the middle of the Service the officiating clergyman fell down in a fit, and was borne apparently lifeless out of the church amidst the laughter, and yells, and shouts of execration of a profane crowd, some of them calling out, "It is a judgment of God upon him—now down with Bryan King!" &c.

After the Service there was a cry raised from some cowardly miscreants, for I can characterise them by no milder name, "Let us attack the choir boys!" Now some six or eight of these poor defenceless boys had taken refuge from the mob in the Baptistry of the church. Immediately on hearing of the threatened attack, some few of my friends had placed themselves outside the Baptistry door in order to guard the entrance. In defending their position, one of my friends struck one of the ringleaders upon his hat with his umbrella, and he returned the blow. The churchwardens prosecuted my friend in the Thames police court for the offence, defending the aggressor against the charge of assault which my friend had preferred against him, and the vestry subsequently paid the expenses both of the prosecution and defence.

Can any one doubt then the entire complicity both of the churchwardens and of a majority of the vestry with these wretched rioters? For this same man, who had been so defended by them, was afterwards apprehended and prosecuted by the police for his offence in instigating a riot against the clergy of the Mission Chapel in Wellclose Square on Sunday, September 25th, for which he was bound over in his own recognizances by the Magistrate at the Thames Police Court,—and again this same man is at the present time being prosecuted in the Consistory Court of the Diocese for two acts of brawling in the parish church.¹

But now in the middle of August the health both of myself and of my assistant curate gave way under the harassing trials to which we had been exposed, and we were compelled to seek for rest.

The duties of my church now devolved upon the clergy of the S. George's Mission, who have never failed me in my need, and upon such other friends as nobly offered their

¹ He was convicted of one of these offences, April 17th. See note at p. 27.

services in this our extremity. And here I can never cease to regret the hostile course, subsequently however retracted, which you, my Lord, pursued towards one of those friends at the instance of the vestry.

The profane riots during Divine Service continued unabated: sometimes one of the Sunday Services was obliged to be suspended altogether; the churchwardens, even when present in the church, never gave a single offender into custody, however ruffianly may have been the outrages committed, until on Sunday, September 18th, the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, who had entered the church for the purpose of saying the Litany, was assaulted by the mob, the churchwarden being present, and was with difficulty rescued from their violence by the aid of five policemen.

Upon this, it can hardly be a matter of surprise that I should have written an urgent appeal to your Lordship, requesting you to order the church to be closed for the present. I myself was absent in broken health; all the anxiety and danger of continuing the Services were being devolved upon others; the police authorities and the Home Secretary had been appealed to for protection by the clergy in charge, but in vain;¹ and nothing save this extreme step of closing the church altogether, seemed to be left in order to preserve the worship of Almighty God from further desecration.

Accordingly, on Sunday Sept. 25th, the church was closed by an order from your Lordship addressed to the churchwardens.

In the meantime on Sept. 2nd, the vestry had availed themselves of the occurrence of these disgraceful outrages in order to invoke your Lordship's interference with that mode of celebrating Divine Service in my church, to which they affected to ascribe all the disturbances. Accordingly they wrote to your Lordship, through the vestry clerk, under the above date, concluding their appeal in the following words: "The vestry therefore earnestly entreat your Lordship's authority to put an end to these unseemly disturbances by restoring the afternoon service to its usual hour, and prohibiting the use of unaccustomed vestments by the officiating clergy." To this appeal you replied in a letter dated Sept. 5th, which was published in the newspapers at the time.

In this letter I could not but deeply regret that you had

¹ See Correspondence between the clergy, &c., with the Home Office, printed by order of the House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1860.

chosen such a time for reflecting upon the "foolish practices" which I had adopted, and for indicating that you had little hopes of your advice being listened to on my part; because such expressions seemed directly calculated to encourage and even to aggravate that virulent opposition and outrage of which the Services of my church were being made the objects.

You further stated in effect that the fixing of the hours for the lecturer's Service was beyond your legal power of control. And upon the second point upon which your aid had been invoked, you stated that at least there was so much colour of the letter of the law in favour of my right to use the vestments complained of, that you shrunk from the responsibility of appealing to a court of law upon the question, though at the same time you assured the vestry that you would not hesitate to deprive of his licence, any one in the subordinate position of assistant-curate, should he so offend, inasmuch as he was destitute of that legal protection which is enjoyed by one in the position of an *Incumbent*. In fine, you offered your intervention as mediator between the vestry and myself upon the points in dispute.

But shortly after this offer was thus made, and most probably in consequence of this offer, the vestry met and enlarged their demands much beyond the limits of the two points upon which they had been content to invoke your interference in their letter of Sept. 2nd; now requiring nothing short of an absolute return to the mode in which the Services of my church had been conducted when I became rector, seventeen years ago. Of course I declined to accede to any such terms as these, and from my first communication with your Lordship on the subject, distinctly and emphatically limited my consent to your mediation to those two specific points upon which your interference had been originally invoked in the letter of the vestry of Sept. 2nd.

And here perhaps I was wrong in consenting at all to refer to any mediation that question of vestments, in which I must maintain that I had the clear law of the Church and State of England on my side: it would have been better perhaps had I maintained my stand upon the law, and been content to appeal to the law, however vainly, for protection, merely submitting to mediation the very subordinate question of the hour of the lecturer's Service. Certainly I found then, (as I did upon a subsequent occasion, when out of de-

ference to your appeal, I gave up the practice of turning to the east at the ascription of praise to the HOLY TRINITY after the sermon,) that nothing is gained, but everything is lost, by concessions made to lawless clamour and outrage; but, broken in health and spirits, the proposition was made by your Lordship as the only prospect of promoting peace, and I thus was induced to accept it.

After the consecration of S. Matthew's church in this parish on Nov. 4th, your Lordship carried out this mediation in the presence of the churchwardens, myself, and your legal secretary; and I consented to be bound by your decision on the following condition: i.e., "So long as the parish did not disturb me in any of the other matters complained of, but that if they took an adverse course in these respects, I should consider myself at liberty to, and should, repudiate the decision as to the lecturer and the vestments."¹

You decided both the points of reference in favour of the remonstrants, deciding that the lecturer's Service should take place at half-past 3 p.m., though I pointed out the great inconvenience of this arrangement, as dissociating the celebration of churchings and baptisms from my Service of the Litany, with which hitherto they had been continuous, and thus imposing additional labour upon the parochial clergy.

Still of course I acquiesced in the decision, and my church was re-opened under this arrangement on Sunday, Nov. 6th.

It is not perhaps at all remarkable that with this re-opening of the church the late outrages during Divine Service should have been renewed. The morning Service was seriously interrupted, the Litany Service at a quarter to 3 much more seriously; and from the presence of a threatening crowd at the church gates soon after 6 p.m., it was deemed prudent not to attempt the celebration of evening Service.

Of a lawless and profane mob pampered in its demands by indulgence it is ever especially true that its

"Appetite
Grows by what it feeds on."

It was asserted at the time by several parishioners² and in most of the newspapers that this renewed disturbance was

¹ Extract from the record of the Arbitration of the Bishop's legal secretary.

² "The disturbance of Sunday last was provoked by the Rector's intemperate sermon in the morning." Extract from a memorial signed by 51 rate-payers of S. George's in the East, and presented to the Home Secretary, as printed by order of the House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1860.

to be ascribed to the intemperate sermon which I preached on the occasion of the opening. Now the fact that the morning Prayers (of course *before* the sermon) had been more seriously interrupted than I had ever witnessed before; and the real character of my sermon,¹ which was shortly afterwards published, sufficiently proved the utter groundlessness of this assertion.

And here, on the revival of these profane riots, I cannot but regret that your Lordship did not see fit, in the exercise of your Episcopal office, to convey some mark of public rebuke upon the unhappy creatures who had been guilty of all this sacrilege and sin. You had not hesitated to convey such public rebuke upon *myself*, but now that I had submitted to your arbitration, and had faithfully carried out the award of such arbitration, I submit that I was fairly entitled to look for some support. But your Lordship was altogether silent, and further, when you were requested to come and preach in my church during the season of Advent you declined.

This, however, you did. You seconded my appeal to the Home Secretary for the attendance of police within my church, which was granted on November 13th, and for some following Sundays.

And here on this day, (November 13th,) the churchwarden showed for the first time anything like vigour in maintaining order in the church; but in this instance, unhappily, it was shown at the expense of a mistaken friend of order. A stranger of apparently weak intellect was in the church, and seeing the choir-stalls occupied by several gentlemen who were in fact friends of mine, and who were only occupying them for the purpose of resigning their places to the clergy and choir on their entering the church, he, upon the entrance of the choir, imprudently demanded the choir-stalls for their use, and for this offence he was immediately given into charge of the police by the churchwarden.

I mention this circumstance, because, so far as I know, it has been the first, and, with one exception, (Sunday, February 5th,) *the only occasion*, through these last ten months of outrage, desecration, and blasphemy, on which the churchwarden has taken this step.

Notwithstanding the presence of the police, the Services of

¹ "A Warning against the Sin of Sacrilege." A Sermon, &c. 2nd edit. Masters, 1859.

November 13th were very seriously interrupted in the afternoon; dogs howling (as was presumed from the effect of drugs administered to them for the purpose) were turned into the church, and other excesses were committed. The interruptions continued on the succeeding Sundays, but became gradually less serious until Christmas-day, when the Services were celebrated almost entirely without interruption.

But now unhappily the Home Secretary and the chief commissioner of police resolved upon at once withdrawing the whole of the police from within the church. It was in vain that I urged upon both of those authorities the importance of a *gradual* in place of a *sudden* withdrawal; in vain that I urged upon them the fact, that upon the following Sunday, (January 1st,) the Rev. Hugh Allen was to officiate for the last time in the church, as had been generally announced by placards, and that consequently considerable increase of excitement might be expected.

The design was carried into execution, and accordingly, as might naturally have been looked for, the Services of the latter part of the day, when the fact of the withdrawal of the police had become known, were again subject to serious interruptions. On the following Sunday, January 8th, these interruptions were renewed, and the clergy and choir were assailed and hustled on their retiring from the church to the vestry. On the next Sunday, January 15th, all this was repeated with the additional outrage that the clergy and choir were detained prisoners in the vestry for half-an-hour after the Litany-Service, where they were beset by a crowd of some hundreds of people, the police having been appealed to in vain for assistance in their extrication.

Thus the disturbances continued, until they reached their climax on Sundays, January 29th, and February 5th, when the scenes during the celebration of evening Service were perfectly unparalleled for their atrocity. The whole service was interrupted by hissing, whistling, and shouting. Several songs were roared out by many united voices during the reading of the Lessons and the preaching of the sermon; hassocks were thrown down from the galleries; and after the Service, cushions, hassocks, and books were hurled at the Altar and its furniture.

I myself, and the other officiating clergy, had been spit upon, hustled, and kicked within the church, and had only been protected from greater outrages, for several Sundays

past, by the zealous devotion of some sixty or eighty gentlemen who attended from different parts of London, only *one* of whom had I previously known, and *not one* of whom had I ever invited to attend.

But now at length public feeling was utterly scandalised by these horrible atrocities. The Home Secretary was appealed to by newspapers, by several prominent members in both Houses of Parliament; and lastly, by a deputation on behalf of more than 2,000 memorialists, amongst whom were upwards of 50 London incumbents besides about 100 other clergymen of every shade of theological sentiment. At length he consented again to authorise the attendance of the police within the church.

But here I cannot but regret that the police authorities did not act in concert with myself in arranging the mode of that attendance. One of the grounds assigned by the chief commissioner of police for their removal on January 1st, was the inconvenience which resulted from the withdrawal of so many from their ordinary duties. Now as soon as I learnt from the churchwarden, on the evening of February 11th, that the police were to attend at all the Services of the following day, I wrote to the superintendent conveying the conviction of the churchwarden and myself, that inasmuch as the morning Service had been almost entirely uninterrupted for some Sundays, the attendance of police at that Service was very undesirable—I believe that the chief commissioner of police was appealed to upon the point; but notwithstanding this, a force of sixty policemen were marched into the church on the following morning; the effect of such unnecessary display obviously only tending to excite irritation, and to provoke those very disturbances which it was intended to repress.

But now I come to the main object of this letter in pointing out the virtual encouragement which has been accorded to all these most sad acts of sacrilege by those in authority.

I have described some of those acts, and have spoken strongly of the character of the outrages and blasphemies which have been committed in my church; but I would here distinctly wish to be understood as applying such language rather to the *acts* than to the misguided *actors*. With the exception of a few who have acted, I fear, from motives of sheer depravity and ruffianism, and a few others, who have acted under the infatuation of a rabid puritanism, the great majority of those who have attended the church for the pur-

pose of disturbing the services have been, I am sure, simply misled by the conduct of those who ought to have been the very first to set a very different example. Of this majority—consisting, perhaps, mainly of those who are never in the habit of attending any place of worship—in their mere ignorance and heedlessness, I am sure that it may truly be said, “These sheep, what have they done !” They have indeed but wandered astray whither they have been led.

And first as to those whose most immediate duty it was to put a stop to these riots—the *churchwardens*. Readers of the newspaper reports have seen much of “the praiseworthy exertions of Mr. Churchwarden Thompson.” Perhaps the readers of this letter may be of opinion that those exertions have been of a very problematical character. I have already had occasion to make frequent allusions to the conduct of these officers ; and can any one for a moment doubt but that if, on the first outbreak of these riots on May 22nd, 1859, instead of openly abetting the originator of all the disturbances in his unseemly act of irregularity, they had, as they were bound to do by their solemn obligations, committed some of the offenders to the charge of the police, can any one, I say, for a moment doubt but that, had they thus acted, this would have been the last as it was the first day of these infamous riots ?

Next, as to the *vestry*. I have already alluded to one instance of their complicity with the rioters. But the proceedings of many of their meetings, at least so much of them as was fit for publication, have been reported in the newspapers ; and it is competent for any one to form his own opinion of the tendency and spirit of those proceedings. Thus at one of their meetings a member, who seems to have been entirely unrebuked, characterized myself as “a perverse rebellious devil,” whilst at another it was proposed that I should be “dragged out of the church and placed under the pump.” But those on the spot who have witnessed the prominent part taken in all these disturbances by several members of the vestry, and have seen the inflammatory placards displayed in their shop windows, may be able to form a still more accurate judgment upon the point.

Next, as to the *police authorities*. The persistence of the chief commissioner in refusing to allow the attendance of the police within the church, and in regarding disturbances committed there as something quite exceptional from the general surveillance and interference of the police, is suffi-

ciently notorious. But he had also declined to allow them to act at all in the church by taking offenders into custody when summoned to do so by myself. At an interview held with him on August 2nd, and subsequently in a letter of August 3rd, I had called his attention to the provisions of an Act (1 Mary, sess. ii. c. 3) which empowered and directed constables to apprehend such offenders; when he had replied that the same Act also empowered *any other persons* to apprehend such offenders, and had suggested that I might thus cause any offending party to be apprehended;¹ knowing, I presume, that it would have been impossible for me to have taken any such offender before a magistrate on the spot, and knowing also (what I presume to be the case) that any such offender would not have been taken into charge at the police-station, except at the hands of a police-constable.

Next, as to the *government authorities*. I have already adverted to the neglect of the Home Secretary to grant any assistance when he was urgently appealed to by the curate in charge of the parish church, September 6, 1859;² and again to his unwillingness to authorise the attendance of the police within the church a second time, until he had been repeatedly urged to this step in both Houses of Parliament and in other ways. But over and above all this, my correspondence with him of March 2nd and March 6th,³ as printed by order of the House of Commons, March 20, 1860, has shown his refusal to authorise the police to remove from the church persons who were guilty of an undoubted trespass, and who had desecrated the church by some acts of even revolting profanity.

¹ It is a remarkable circumstance that these two letters were omitted in the return made by the chief commissioner to the order of the House of Commons for the printing of all correspondence, February 8, 1860, and were only supplied on a special order being made for them, February 29, 1860.

It is very instructive to combine the suggestion here given by the Chief Commissioner of Police with the observations of the Chancellor of the Diocese in his judgment delivered in the Consistory Court, April 17th, in the case of a person convicted of the offence of "brawling" in my church. This legal authority apparently ignored the existence of this Statute of 1 Mary, sess. ii. c. 3 altogether, and laid it down that the rector had nothing to do with preserving order in the church, and that if any person at his direction laid violent hands upon any other party in a church, he would be punishable in the Ecclesiastical Court by imprisonment and excommunication under *the earlier statute* of 5th and 6th of Edward VI. (1) This is one instance of the ingenuity which has been displayed by the authorities in the case of these miserable riots; the effect of which (whatever may have been the design) has been to render the repression of outrages and blasphemies in the service of Almighty God almost hopeless.

² See correspondence printed by order of the House of Commons, February 8, 1860.

³ See Appendix.

Next, as to the *police magistrates*. Now, though many of these unhappy rioters have been tried before the magistrates for their offences, upon not *one* has any penalty been inflicted; ¹ at least the only penalty inflicted has consisted in two of such offenders having been called upon to sign their names to an engagement, undertaking not to disturb divine service in future. So that, as I am informed, the expression is now commonly used at meetings of the “anti-Puseyite league,” in reference to any pending prosecution, “Oh, the magistrates *dare not convict*.”

But now mark the contrast of this apparent leniency towards one side with the course which has been pursued towards the other.

It is certainly not generally understood that *the clergy* of the parish have been the only offenders in all these months of riot; but it is not a little remarkable that in fact the clergy, together with one of their friends, have been *the only parties* upon whom any penalty has been inflicted by the magistrates.

The Rev. C. F. Lowder was fined 2s. (December 8, 1859,) for an alleged assault upon a person whom he prevented from forcing his way into the church through my private door which led through my vestry. The Rev. T. D. Dove was induced by the magistrate (March 8) to pay 40s. expenses on the withdrawal of a summons for an alleged assault in preventing another person from entering the church through the same door. On the same day a gentleman was fined 60s. for an alleged assault in vainly attempting to remove a trespasser from the church at my direction; whilst on the same occasion I was myself convicted for an alleged assault, and fined in the sum of 5s.

And now upon the circumstances of this last conviction I would venture to make a few remarks. I was summoned by three separate complainants for having assaulted them in

¹ Since the original publication of this letter, a man who had come from Kennington to assist at the protestant demonstration of S. George's was given in charge of the police by a friend of mine, and fined in the sum of £1. 6s. 8d. at the Thames Police Court, April 9th, for the offence of hissing during the Evening Service of Easter Day; but this fine was returned by the Magistrate, April 20th, on his discovering that he had no summary jurisdiction in the case, and that he ought to have committed the offender to the Assizes. And, again, another person, alluded to in the note at page 32, was convicted, April 17th, in the Consistory Court for the offence of brawling in the church on Sunday, November 6th, 1859: he was admonished and condemned in the sum of £10 towards the plaintiff's costs.

endeavouring to remove them from the church on the afternoon of Sunday, March 4th.

Now, as I do not know that I had ever yet been accused of uttering even an *angry word* in return for all the abuse and contumely and violence to which I had been subjected for the last ten months, it is perhaps scarcely necessary that I should here most emphatically declare that I never so much as *touched* any one of those complainants; save that, on my addressing any one of them with the request that he would leave the church, inasmuch as he was committing a trespass, and on his pretending not to hear me, I laid my hand gently on his shoulder merely to call his attention on my repeating my request. If he then persisted in remaining, or if he refused to leave, I then requested some of my friends to remove him.

The first case then was gone into at the Thames police court on March 8th, the witnesses on both sides were examined, and the case was dismissed. Upon this, the solicitor employed by the complainants said that as this was his strongest case, and as he had now no expectation of gaining a conviction upon the others, he should withdraw from prosecuting them; but now the second complainant insisted upon prosecuting his own case; he was rebuked by the magistrate for his offensive conduct in the witness-box, and his case was also dismissed. Upon this, the third complainant failed to appear, another case was called on, and it was of course assumed by myself and by all interested that the third prosecution had been withdrawn. My counsel, my solicitor, and my witnesses all left the court, I myself by a mere accident remaining; but after the termination of the last case here alluded to, the third complainant against myself appeared in the witness-box in order to prosecute his complaint; and I may here state that I was never so amazed and really *appalled* as when I saw a police-sergeant (whom I had sent for into the church, and of whose conduct there on March 4th I had been obliged to complain to the Home Secretary in my letter of March 6th¹) distinctly swear that he saw me commit a most ruffianly assault upon this complainant in the church.² He was, indeed, rebuked by the

¹ See Appendix.

² Happily there will be an opportunity in an action for trespass against this complainant now pending in the Court of Common Pleas for showing the real character of his evidence and of that of his witnesses.

magistrate for the palpable exaggerations of his statement, but he was followed by two or three constables who dutifully supported their sergeant, with very much the same story. Then, on the magistrate beginning to adjudicate upon the case, I appealed for an adjournment, on the ground that all my witnesses had left the court, under the conviction that the summons had been withdrawn. On the magistrate asking whether I could produce the gentlemen who actually did remove the complainant from the church, I replied, "Yes, Mr. M——, for instance, was one of them : he has been waiting here the whole day, but has now left the court ;" when the magistrate replied, "Oh, Mr. M—— is a personal friend of my own ; I don't think that my view of the case would be affected by any additional evidence ;" and then decided the case on the very original application of the avowed principle of "giving a triumph to neither party," by fining me in the sum of 5s. for the assault.

Now I do not wish to accuse the magistrate in question of committing the slightest act of conscious injustice—on the contrary, I believe him to be a most high-minded man—but I cannot help fearing that his decisions in this and similar instances may have been unconsciously warped by the strong popular feeling which has been exhibited on one side of these questions.

I have now given a simple statement of facts bearing upon the conduct of those in authority, from the churchwardens of the parish, to the members of the Government ; and I may ask, Is it absolutely credible that the continuance of these most disgraceful riots in a church for the space of ten months should have been possible,—that not a single offender should have been brought to justice for his conduct, if there had been *the slightest wish* on the part of any of the civil authorities to bring these riots to a termination ?

And now, my Lord, I would most willingly and gladly cut short this sad narrative here. For months past, I in my grievous perplexities and difficulties have been well content to submit in sadness and silence to a course of conduct which has not seemed to me to be quite consistent with generosity or even with strict fairness and justice. I have been willing to bear all this rather than take any step in revealing what seemed to be the faults, or at least the *mistakes*, of one whom I was bound by very sacred obligations to regard with dutiful respect. I had been too hasty in doing this (I candidly and regretfully admit it) once before, and therefore I was well

content to be, if that were possible, too remiss in doing this upon the present occasion. But now, alas! the religious interests of these poor misguided people, who have been encouraged in their most sad acts of sacrilege,—the interests of my brother clergy of this diocese,—and even of the Church at large, seem to require me to keep silence no longer.

I have, my Lord, already in this letter alluded to the conduct which you judged fit to pursue in respect to the licensing of Mr. Allen to the lectureship. I have also alluded to the very inopportune moment which you selected for holding up myself to something like public odium in your published letter of September 5th, but that, alas! has not been the solitary instance.

It is true that on January 30th, you appealed to the government in the House of Lords to bring the offenders at my church to justice; it is true that you then stated that until this were done, and the majesty of the law thus vindicated, any changes in the services of the church were impossible.¹

Would indeed that your subsequent conduct had been in strict consistency with that statement! But on February 13th you spoke in the same place in a very different spirit. Lord Ebury had presented a petition of the vestry and another from several parishioners, against myself; but in doing this he had generously borne his testimony to my personal character and bearing;² it might perchance have been expected that on such an occasion the Bishop of the diocese would not have entirely withheld his *public* testimony from a clergyman who was certainly understood generally to be “suffering wrongfully,” especially as that Bishop was known to have been profuse in such expressions of personal respect towards the clergyman in question *in private*. But so far was this from being the case, that you took this opportunity of holding me up in effect as having “irritated the feelings of a protestant congregation,” and as having had “recourse to practices in conducting Divine Service calculated to offend or alienate the great body of the parishioners.”³ Now, my

¹ Report of the *Times*, January 31st.

² This part of his Lordship's speech was carefully eliminated from the reports of most of the newspapers—it appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of February 14th, and perhaps in some others.

³ Report of the *Times*, Feb. 14th. The following letter is given as one out of very many of similar character received by me, illustrative of that protestant spirit which has been provoked:—“I hereby warn you that unless you desist from your hellish and popish practice and preaching in our parish church, I shall take foul means to prevent you doing so; the proper place for you to

Lord, when you thus spoke, when you thus seemed to indicate a not doubtful sympathy for those protestant feelings which were said to have been irritated, it was within a few days of that Sunday (Feb. 5th,) when this very questionable phase of protestantism had reached its very climax of atrocity, and had been stamped by almost every newspaper with the simple character of "devilish!"

But this act, my Lord, was but an error in *judgment* perhaps,—of which probably I, however keenly I may feel it and regret it, may be the last who ought to express an opinion.

I must now, however, proceed to notice other acts of your Lordship which I fear can scarcely be characterised by the above expression.

I have alluded to the *apparently* different measures of justice which have been dealt out to the two parties of this sad controversy in the Thames police court; but would indeed, my Lord, that my complaint under this head were limited to that sphere!

Alas! it is far otherwise. In your letter to the vestry of this parish, of Sept. 5th, 1859, whilst you declined the risk of prosecuting me for using those vestments which you could not but admit might have "the letter of the law" on their side; yet, at the same time, you offered every facility and almost *encouragement* to the vestry to do this for themselves. You stated that in the event of their "desire to prosecute the rector" for this act "you should be ready when called upon to afford them all due facilities for the commencement of their lawsuit, so far as your authority extended." And again, you stated that "you should be ready to further their prosecution in a court of law of those whom you could not yourself reach summarily."

Now of course I have no strict right to complain of these expressions; but now mark the contrast afforded by the conduct of your official representative when the prosecution of some of the *riotous disturbers of Divine Service* was in question!

About the very same time that you thus wrote, I wished to prosecute three offenders in your Consistory Court for acts of aggravated brawling on Sunday, August 14th, consisting in shouting out the responses of the Litany so as to interrupt the officiating clergyman, in hissing and loud talking during

preach in is H—ll, where you will soon be, as the devil's claws are on you already. . . . I am one of a secret society which has sworn to see your downfall. I am, a PROTESTANT."

the service. But your chancellor *refused to allow the office of the judge to be promoted* in the matter, and it was only eventually, when Dr. Phillimore moved *in open court* for such consent to be granted in the case of the most flagrant of those three offenders, that such consent was reluctantly accorded.¹

But even this is not all. I must now refer to a matter in which you, my Lord, were even still more *personally* concerned.

When people first began to take possession of the choir-stalls for the purpose of excluding the clergy and choir from their places, and so of interfering with the orderly celebration of Divine Service, the curate, then in charge of the parish church during my absence, appealed personally to yourself, requesting you to put a stop to such unseemly proceedings by formally directing the churchwardens to appropriate those seats to the use of the clergy and choir; but you replied that even were you disposed to do this, you had no power to do it of your mere personal authority, and could only do so *through your court*.

Now mark the contrast. When you were subsequently appealed to by the churchwardens on behalf of those whom at least I cannot truthfully characterise as "the friends of order," then you had no difficulty, but quite independently of your court, and through your own *mere personal monition*, you ordered the churchwardens to remove those same choir-stalls entirely away!

Alas! my Lord, we have been wont to boast that here in England, at least, the administration of the law was strictly impartial; that here at least the worst criminal received equal justice with the noblest subject, nay with the very Sovereign on her throne. Now be it so that in all this sad controversy I may have been deserving of no sympathy whatever, and the

¹ The whole course of proceedings in this instance has been indeed painfully suggestive. Owing to the publicity thus given to the commencement of proceedings against this offender, he attempted to escape from the serving of the citation upon him, and for an entire week succeeded in eluding the search of the officers of the court; but he could not forego the gratification of his usual Sunday occupation, and thought probably that he was safe from legal process on that day; accordingly he entered the church on the afternoon of Sunday, January 8th, and was there served with the citation, authorities having held that in a cause "*pro salute animæ*" such a process was perfectly good. But then when he was being tried for his offence in the Consistory Court, April 3rd, after all the witnesses had been examined, and when there could be little doubt on the minds of any present what the result must inevitably be, the Chancellor himself sitting as judge, raised the technical objection of that serving of the citation on the Sunday, which had been rendered inevitable by his own previous conduct.

profane rioters of all possible countenance and support. Have we been respectively treated in such instances with *strict and impartial justice*?

But now, my Lord, I come to the saddest of all the sad acts of this history.

The apse of my church had for some time been ornamented by hangings of damask,¹ (crimson, with gold coloured fleurs-de-lis,) they were employed to conceal a wall the colouring of which had become extremely sordid and mean. Shortly before the present season of Lent, I was requested to accept other hangings of a perfectly plain and subdued character to be used during Lent. At first I declined this offer, as not wishing, in the present excited temper of people's minds, to make any such alteration. Eventually, however, I was induced to accept the offer on the assurance that the proposed hangings should be of the most quiet and unobtrusive character possible. They were accordingly substituted for the original hangings on Ash-Wednesday, when for the first time I saw them; I then perceived that the "dossal," or cloth immediately behind and above the Altar, had been decorated with a dark red cross, differently from the mode by which the one for which it had been substituted had been characterised. I requested that this might be changed, so as to resemble the original dossal as much as possible. This was accordingly done, and on the following Friday it was thus reinstated.

All this was explained and pointed out to your chaplain, when on Saturday, Feb. 25th, you sent him to inspect these new hangings, with a letter addressed to myself on the subject. I had however been summoned by telegraph into the country, to a sick child on the morning of that day; on the evening of Saturday you sent a letter to the church-

¹ When these hangings had been originally introduced by me in Dec., 1857, one of the churchwardens had objected to their continuance in the church, and accordingly, at the request of your Lordship, I met the churchwardens in your presence at London House. On one of them objecting to the illegality of such decorations, I had said, "I observe by the newspapers that the Chapel Royal, S. James's, of which you, my Lord, are the Dean, is now being decorated with hangings in preparation for the marriage of the Princess Royal, and I presume that there is not one law for S. James's and another for S. George's." Upon which your Lordship said, "Oh, of course, there can be no question as to the strict *legality* of such decorations. When I was Dean of Carlisle Cathedral, I myself decorated the east wall with such hangings." After this, who can wonder that I should have persisted in the use of my own, and who, alas! can cease to wonder at the act of your Lordship of March 10th, subsequently narrated in this letter?

wardens directing them to remove these new hangings, which they did on Sunday (Feb. 26th) immediately before the morning Service. Upon this my friends on the spot reinstated the original hangings into their place, after the morning Service, under the very natural impression that it was to the *change* of the hangings under the circumstances to which you objected.

Now had you, my Lord, written to myself after this, stating the grounds upon which you had taken the very unprecedented step of thus summarily ordering these new hangings to be removed, I should perhaps have had no right whatever to complain, but you did not thus act.

Upon my return to S. George's, I consulted a very high legal authority upon your Lordship's act, and was informed that it had been quite illegal. Accordingly, on Feb. 29th, I wrote to you, informing you of this circumstance, and at the same time "making it a matter of special request that in the event of your Lordship's wishing to have any alterations made in the arrangements of my church in future, you would be kind enough to carry those wishes into effect either with my own concurrence, or through the decision of a court of law." Now I must submit that under the circumstances, this request was very far from being an unreasonable one; but mark the response with which it met.

On March 3rd your chancellor and legal secretary met the churchwardens by appointment, and by my permission visited the church, inspecting the hangings, Altar, choir-stalls, &c. Your chancellor was then distinctly informed by my legal friend, who had advised that the original hangings should be reinstated in their place on Sunday Feb. 26th, of the ground on which he had given that advice, as being, in his opinion, in accordance with what you would have desired—and to this extent I had then distinctly endorsed the act; though I now candidly admit that, so far as I can now judge, I do not think that I should have reinstated the original hangings had I been present, simply on the ground, overlooked by my friends at the time, that those hangings had always hitherto been taken down during the season of Lent. But to proceed. Two or three days after this, the churchwardens, instructed apparently by your officers, made a presentment of certain articles of furniture and ornament; and on Saturday (March 10th) I received a letter from your Lordship, followed by the serving of a formal monition upon me, requiring me "to say or sing the prayers, &c. in the reading-desk," in-

stead of in the choir-stalls where they had been hitherto said.

Now, as you had never yet intimated to me *the shadow of a wish* that I should thus act, I might complain that this hostile act of serving me with a formal monition in the first instance, savoured some little of a lack of courtesy.

But this consideration is absolutely of no weight compared with what followed. On the same day you sent a monition, not through your court, for a "caveat" against any such proceeding had been entered there, but simply as a *personal* act, directing the churchwardens to remove the moveable cross from the super-Altar, the hangings from the apse, and the seats, which had been fitted up and used as choir-stalls, from their place.

Accordingly, whilst we were celebrating the evening Service of Saturday (March 10th), the churchwardens entered the church, with carpenters and others, and immediately after the Service, proceeded to carry out the prescribed work of removal and demolition.

Now I do not care here to dwell upon the point of your own instrumentality in *getting up*, through your officers, the churchwardens' presentment to yourself, (which, I presume, I may assume to have been the case,) neither do I care here to regard this act in its strictly *legal* aspect, though I have received a somewhat decided opinion from a high authority in ecclesiastical law upon that point.¹

But only mark *the special juncture of time and circumstances* in which this act was committed.

On the afternoons of Sundays February 26th and March 4th, a number of people had persisted in remaining in the church from the time of the conclusion of the afternoon Service at about 4.40 P.M., until the commencement of the evening Service at 7 P.M. They did this for the purpose of excluding the clergy and choir from the choir-stalls at the evening Service.

And on these two occasions they selected *three articles*, as *the special objects of their profane attacks*. They seized possession of the *choir-stalls*, and there made their meal; they

¹ "In any case a party affected by a presentment is surely entitled to be acquainted with its contents. Of late years, moreover, especially in matters (like the present) relating to a Faculty, the tendency of the Court has been to consider no act legally binding without the authority of the Court. And I had supposed it to be a well established axiom of ecclesiastical law, that no ornament can be removed from a church, however illegally put up, without the authority of the Ecclesiastical Court." Dr. Phillimore's opinion on the above case.

pelted *the hangings* with orange-peel and bread and butter, the refuse of their profane meal,¹ and they pelted and threw down *the Altar-cross* with stair-carpet rods.²

Besides this, on March 4th, they crammed one of the Altar-carpets into a large stove, and some person made use of one of the pews (No. 16 in the south aisle)—I shrink from the necessity of mentioning this act of revolting desecration—as *a water-closet!*

And now mark the immediate reward which was accorded to these wretched, misguided people, for these their acts of impious sacrilege.

On Saturday next, March 10th, *all the objects of their special spite and ungodly hate are swept away for them, by the order of the Bishop of the diocese!*

When I had ventured to remonstrate on your act of ordering the removal of the Lenten hangings during my absence from home, as I have before stated, you had replied that, “after seriously considering all that had occurred in my parish of late, it would be unbecoming your office now to prefer any request to me in this matter.”

Alas! my Lord, when you thus carried out the wishes of these most unhappy rioters *in the very act of their worst sa-*

¹ “What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God?” 1 Cor. xi. 22.

² The following description of the scene is evidently from an eye-witness: “The space between the pulpit and altar-rails was filled by noisy knots of persons discussing the proceedings of the morning (i. e., the removal of the Lenten hangings by order of the Bishop): all were agreed that, if they were churchwardens, they wouldn’t be beaten, but would remove the crimson ones as well. About sixty remained, two-thirds of whom were lads of from fifteen to eighteen. There were also some young women, who brought the usual volubility of their sex to bear upon theology, who spoke of Mr. King with anything but womanly kindness, and who coveted his crimson hangings for window curtains. Like all crowds with no particular occupation, they seized on every expedient for a little excitement. Baptisms were being performed in the vestry,” (baptistry,) “and whenever the open door gave a glimpse of a surplice within, there was a general groan. Then a man was observed in the gallery with his hat, and cries of ‘Take your hat off!’ were directed at him; after which there was a loud laugh, as if the idea of their feeling any reverence for the place struck them as one of the richest of jokes. Then the beadle, ‘Button,’ who kept to his post in front of the rails, was chaffed about his tea and toast being cold, and many playful witticisms were made upon his name. Some boys in the gallery began to sing the latest street melody about betting his money on bold Tom Sayers, but this was immediately suppressed; ‘If we make much noise, they’ll turn us out,’ supplied the motive. . . . We had left the company in the state we mentioned; we found, on re-entering, that gas was being lighted, and that some of them had amused themselves by throwing things at the altar: one of the candles had a piece broken off it, we learned by a projected stair-rod,” &c.—*East London Observer, March 3rd.*

crilege, (I say it in the bitterness of sorrow and humiliation which I cannot conceal,) would to God that the reflection had occurred to you whether there was anything “unbecoming your office” *in this!*

God indeed forbid, my Lord, that I should in the least degree insinuate that you were *aware* of the circumstances under which you directed this act of removal and demolition to be carried out!—But had you only seen fit to show me the courtesy of informing me of your intentions on the subject, I should of course have pointed out to you the above circumstances; and I am sure that you would then rather have forfeited your right hand than thus have acted.

But alas! the evil has been done;—the lesson has been taught;—and the fatal encouragement to all this foul sacrilege has been in act, though not of course *in intention*, given! And what wonder then, is it, my Lord, that on the three Sundays which have elapsed since this last act of yours has been consummated, the disturbances during Divine Service and the blasphemies following have been more violent than they have ever yet been during the occupancy of the church by the police?¹

And now what is to be the issue of all this series of outrage and blasphemy? The Services of my church now are almost precisely the same as are celebrated in every cathedral of England, save that simple hymns are sung in place of elaborate anthems, and in many and many parish churches.

Because for the last ten months these Services have been assailed by lawless and brutal riot,—because the rioters have hitherto been allowed to assail these Services with *perfect im-*

¹ Though the disturbances of Divine Service, since the original publication of this letter, have in some measure decreased, owing probably to the convictions of offenders noticed in the note at page 27, yet the outrages committed within the church have in one respect been more ruffianly than ever. Thus at the Evening Service on Easter Day, the choir-boys, in attempting to take their places, were hurled back into the vestry by the mob; whilst a ruffian struck one of them a blow on the head which felled the poor child to the ground; he was carried senseless to the vestry, and thence to the rectory, where he fell into a succession of fits from concussion of the brain from which he is now barely recovering. Again, on the following Sunday (April 15th) a savage attack was made upon the choir-boys on their leaving the church after Evening Service, and it was only by great exertions of the police that they and the clergy were enabled to make their way to the vestry. This is the brutal ruffianism which has been permitted to go on, Sunday after Sunday, for eleven months (I must repeat the sad truth) *with the implied sanction of all the authorities*; for whilst the police can immediately put down such ruffianism any where else, their hands seem to be effectually tied when acting (or when *passive*) within my church.

punish,—because the rioters have been in effect *connived at*, *protected*, and *sanctioned* in all their acts by too many of those in authority,—are these Services to be sacrificed? Now, I say it with the fullest deliberation, “With the help of One Who has never yet failed me in my need, *they shall not.*”

Let but the most ordinary and obvious course be taken in regard to these crimes, which would be at once adopted in the case of any other, and when such a course fails, it will be quite time enough to contemplate any other expedient. But in the case of a district, e.g., being so beset by burglars as to be no longer a safe place of residence for peaceable inhabitants, what would be thought of a system of police which guarded that district for a few weeks, and then left it entirely a prey to worse depredations than ever? And what would be thought of an administration of the law which, whilst it rigidly punished every peaceable inhabitant who might have expelled any detected burglar from his house a little too discourteously, was content to exact from any detected criminal the signature of his name to a piece of paper, promising not so to offend in future! Was ever the satire so realised before,

“Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas!”

Let the majesty of the law (or what there is of that majesty left) be vindicated, let but a few of these profane rioters be punished as they deserve, and I venture to say, at that instant there will be an end of all these wicked disturbances.¹

But this, my Lord, is not your view of the question, you have more than once appealed to me to place the whole arrangement of my Services in your hands, with the assurance that this would secure peace. Readers of this letter will be

¹ Of course it is the inevitable tendency of all such unchecked outrages to spread and extend themselves; thus on the re-opening of S. Philip's, Clerkenwell, January 26th, several of the S. George's rioters were present and attempted a disturbance; but the churchwardens did their duty and immediately ordered their removal by the police. On the evening of Sunday, February 19th, several of the rioters, upon finding my church re-occupied by the police, adjourned to S. Matthew's, Pell Street, whilst others of them went to the Wesleyan Chapel, Back Road, attempting disturbances in both places. On the very same Sunday several people attempted to create a disturbance at S. Martin's Church, Liverpool, by calling out “No Popery,” threatening to have a “S. George's in the East row” there. And strangely enough, on the evening of the very same Sunday, several people attempted a disturbance at S. Andrew's Church, Halstead, Essex, by throwing peas, chesnut husks, and orange peel, whilst one man took a lucifer match and lighted a cigar; for these offences summonses were taken out by the churchwarden at the magistrate's court, Halstead, February 23rd.

amazed to learn that this proposal should have been actually made to me, after the occurrence of all that has been detailed in this letter.

Alas ! my past experience of the results of such a process has given me but little encouragement to entertain any such hope.

The question is, and it is a very solemn one, *is it right* that the ritual of a Church, the lawfulness of which is doubted by no one,¹ should be sacrificed to the profane clamours and violence of a mob ?

I know indeed that it is, at the present day, the faithless and fatal policy of those in authority thus to act. For instance, if a bill for the protection of the Lord's Day from needless profanation be brought into parliament, it must be withdrawn at the threats of a mob. If facilities for divorce be demanded—if adulterers claim to be indulged in their unholy unions, and to have the sanction of the Church prostituted in the legal ratification of those unions—if men agitate for the privilege of being united in wedlock with their sisters-in-law, or in any other incestuous connection ; then, in all such instances, the plea is still the same—"the people will have it so," and the authority of the government of the country, (the very term "government" is thus become a mere travestie and mockery of the name), and even of the Church of God must be made to give way.

Surely, my Lord, a stand against the demands of mere popular clamour and mob law must be made sooner or later somewhere. And if it be God's will that such a stand be made here in the church under my charge, be it so. One of the weakest and frailest of His servants has been called upon to make the stand, but there is One Who will prove the excellence of His power by the very weakness of His most unworthy instrument. That help has never yet failed me, and *I am certain* that it never will fail me at my utmost need, and so in the very human hopelessness of my stand consist indeed all my hopes and assurances of success.

My income here has in great part gone, by the loss of almost all fees and offerings in a church which is, with too great reason, regarded as one which is hardly safe for a person to enter for the celebration of the rites of the Church. But He Who careth for the sparrows and feedeth the young ravens

¹ This is virtually admitted by the remonstrants themselves—inasmuch as in the petition presented by them to both Houses of Parliament they state, "the existing state of the law affords no remedy to your petitioners."

which call upon Him, has provided unlooked for means of support in place of that which has been withdrawn.

Twice has my health, delicate at the best, broken down during this weary struggle, but it has been mercifully reinstated, and now is the subject of perfect marvel to myself and to all about me.¹ But even should *my life* be required in this sad contest for Law and Religion against outrage and sacrilege, I humbly trust that that life may be ready to be offered, on behalf of that "Church which is the Body of Him," the all-adorable and the all-blessed One! "Who filleth all in all."

I am, my Lord, yours, &c.

BRYAN KING.

*Rectory, S. George's in the East,
Passiontide, 1860.*

APPENDIX.

RETURN TO AN ADDRESS OF THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF
COMMONS, DATED 14TH OF MARCH, 1860.

*Rectory, S. George's in the East,
March 2, 1860.*

RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,

On Sunday last no police were present at my church at the Lecturer's Service, commencing at 3.30, P.M. (indeed neither the churchwarden nor myself anticipated any necessity for their attendance,) but, as a drunken woman (who was fined 10s. at the Thames Police Court for the offence on Monday last) had to be removed from the church for making a disturbance, the attendance of some policemen would seem to be necessary.

Again, a number of the congregation persisted in remaining in the church from the conclusion of that service at 4.30 P.M., until the evening service at 7 P.M., some of whom pelted the altar with stair-carpet rods, orange-peel, &c., and thus injured some of the altar furniture;

¹ I cannot forbear here from quoting an expression which occurs in one of the latest of those numerous letters of most earnest sympathy which almost every day's post brings me from persons, and especially from brother clergymen, in every part of England:—"When men say no other than yourself could endure so much, they only mean that no man in the world unsupported could endure it at all."

when the curate in charge appealed to the superintendent of police to remove the people from the church, he declined to do so, as being unauthorised by his instructions.

Sir Richard Mayne has since been appealed to, but he replies that, "if the Rector is of opinion that different instructions ought to be given to the police for their guidance, he proposes that the Rector should make an application to the Secretary of State on the subject."

On these grounds then I beg, very respectfully, to request that you will be kind enough to authorise the police to prevent people from remaining in the church after the conclusion of any public service.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) BRYAN KING.

To Sir Geo. C. Lewis, Bart.,
&c. &c. &c.

Whitehall, March 3, 1860.

SIR,

I am directed by Secretary Sir George Lewis to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, asking him to authorise the police to prevent people from remaining in the parish church of S. George's in the East, after the conclusion of any public service, and I am to inform you that it is not competent to a police-constable to use force for expelling from a church persons who remain there after public service, provided that they conduct themselves in a quiet and peaceable manner. If a person under such circumstances should commit a breach of the peace, or should do any injury to property, the police would take him into custody.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GEO. CLIVE.

The Rev. Bryan King,
Rectory, S. George's in the East.

*Rectory, S. George's in the East,
March 6, 1860.*

RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,

I beg very respectfully to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 3rd ult.,¹ in which you state "that it is not competent to a police-constable to use force for expelling from a church persons who remain there after public service, provided that they conduct themselves in a quiet and peaceable manner." In reference to this remark, I would beg to bring under your notice the conduct of the police on Sunday last (March 4th.) The afternoon service was completed at a quarter before 5 P.M.; at 20 minutes before 6 P.M., I entered the church with several friends, and found about 50 persons in possession of the choir-stalls and their precincts. I requested several of them to leave the church,

¹ Sic in original.

which they did; two or three others refused to do so, when I requested some of my friends to remove them, which they did; but as considerable disturbance took place, and a serious breach of the peace seemed imminent in their carrying out my directions as to the forcible removal of others, I sent for the police, who were stationed at the church gates. Upon their entrance, I requested the sergeant (K 7) to remove the people from the church, as they were committing a trespass; he refused to do so, stating that my friends were creating the disturbance by removing people, and that he should take any of them in charge who committed an assault. The police then left the church. After this, it was, of course, hopeless to attempt to clear the church; when I requested some to leave, they replied, "If we have no right to be here, why did the police refuse to remove us?"

Now, during the afternoon, some of the people thus remaining in the church crammed one of the altar carpets into one of the stoves, and did some other mischief. Some had provisions and took their meal in the church, and some person (I shrink from the necessity of stating this disgusting circumstance) made use of a pew (No. 16, in the south aisle) as a water-closet.

May I then beg the favour of your kindly informing me, for my future guidance, whether those people who were committing a palpable trespass, by insisting on remaining in the church against my consent, and who forcibly resisted those who were lawfully trying to remove them, were to be considered as "conducting themselves in a quiet and peaceable manner," and therefore whether the police-sergeant was justified in refusing to remove them?

And if so, may I further beg the favour of your kindly informing me what steps I am to take in the event of these trespassers or others insisting upon taking up their permanent residence within my church? It is open twice or three times every day (for about an hour at each time) for Divine Service, and it may not unreasonably be expected to offer greater attractions than the workhouse as a residence to many who at present are obliged to occupy that building as a home.

I am, &c.

(Signed) BRYAN KING.

To the Right Hon. Sir George C. Lewis, Bart.

&c. &c. &c.

(A mere acknowledgment of the receipt of the foregoing letter was returned under the date of March 12.)







